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The Culture of Distrust. On the Hungarian National Habitus

Miklós Hadas *

Abstract: *»Die Kultur des Misstrauens. Über den nationalen Habitus Ungarns«*. The *Hungarian national* habitus is reconstructed on the basis of studying some persistently recurring structural configurations and behavioural patterns that govern everyday life from the Middle Ages to the 21st century. My main thesis is that while the structural weight of certain institutions and social groups of key importance (first of all towns and urban middle classes) is insignificant in Hungary in the Middle Ages and in the Early Modern period, other social groups (nobility, gentry, peasantry) and social institutions (state, churches) are over-represented. Some pertinent structural homologies between three system-level changes in the 20th century (in 1919, 1945, 1990) are also pointed out. Finally, on the basis of several examples, the term "national culture of distrust" is introduced.

Keywords: Gentry, nobility, peasantry, urbanization deficit, passive resistance, emigration.

1. Introduction

I define *habitus* as behavioural patterns fixed in durable dispositions, which govern human praxis at the non-conscious level; being perceptible, these "structured, structural structures" are liable to social classification and differentiation. In other words – in the wake of Norbert Elias and Pierre Bourdieu – I intend to grasp structurally conditioned, non-conscious, non-intentional, taken-for-granted, durable dispositional patterns (urges, drives, tastes, feelings, inclinations, emotions, value preferences, etc.) that are manifest in continuous improvisations and can be transferred to diverse areas of practice (Bourdieu 1984, 2001; Elias 1997). The two authors can be reduced to a common denominator as there is an intellectual kinship – a kind of *family resemblance* – between them, the essential component of which is, first, their qualitative and culturalist orientation and, second, that both think relationally.

Elias and Dunning draw a parallel between the "parliamentarisation" of the squire and the "sportization" of leisure-time, arguing that the people who sent

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the deputies to the parliament and pursued sports in one another's company were motivated by similar *habitus* components irrespective of their political orientation (Elias and Dunning 1986). Their argument also warns that it would be ill-advised to take parliamentarianism as the cause and sporting customs as the effect because both phenomena are conditioned by the same structural specificities of 18th century English society. Similarly, Bourdieu claims that various existential conditions produce different habituses that can be transferred to diverse areas of practice (Bourdieu 1984). It is to be stressed: habitus as a system of schemes that generates practice does not only express the characteristics of class position but also reveals other specificities conditioned by the complex structure of existential circumstances. It is therefore justified to speak about gender habitus, national habitus, or age-conditioned habitus (more precisely, about the gender, national, or age dimension of the habitus). Hence, when, following Elias, I write about "national habitus," I would like to argue that there are patterns of thought, emotions, and actions recurring obstinately from generation to generation that are imprints of structures crystallized in the long run.

There are, however, a few far from negligible differences between the two approaches: process sociology allows one to grasp more complex relations than the paradigm developed by Bourdieu. Elias, unlike Bourdieu, achieves this without extensively expatiating on habitus but instead by analysing with sensitivity and acumen the complex figurations constituting the web of interdependencies. Furthermore, he does not rest content with exploring the connections between the formations of the actual present (as "presentist" social scientists do), but instead places great emphasis on the study of the long-term transformation of the figurations. In *The Germans* (Elias 1996), trying to explain the emergence of Hitler's "civilized barbarism," he raises the question of "how the fortunes of a nation over the centuries become sedimented into the habitus of its individual members" (Elias 1996, 19).[1] In this book, he makes an "attempt to tease out the developments in the German national habitus which made possible the civilising spurt of the Hitler-epoch, and to work out the connections between them and the long-term process of state-formation in Germany" (Elias 1996, 1).[2]

As is pointed out by van Krieken (1998), Elias distinguishes four specificities of the German state-formation process: 1. the position of Germany within a larger figuration of nation-states; 2. the relative weakness of the German terri-

[1] In the wake of Elias, a very interesting book was also written on the Austrian and the English national character by Kuzmics and Axtmann (2007).

[2] Haferkamp writes that this is a "shift of emphasis from intra-societal to inter-state societal processes" (1987, 546), the result of which is indicated, from the second part of the 20th century, by a terminological change in the Eliasian oeuvre: the focus is not any more on *the* civilizing process (singular) but on civilizing *processes* (plural).

tories compared to the neighbouring states; 3. the larger number of discontinuities in the development of the state; and 4. the ideological weakness of the bourgeoisie relative to the military aristocracy. Elias emphasises that from the 19th century onwards nationalism is of key importance in individual identity-formation: the unstable and fragile national identity encourages a hostility towards "outsiders" or "foreigners" who threaten national identity.[3] Following Karl Mannheim (1952 [1928]), Elias also highlights that long-term social transformations cannot be properly understood without taking into account the relations between generations.

As it will be argued below, there are striking similarities between Germany and Hungary, as far as the characteristics of the national habitus and the state formation are concerned. In what follows, I will take a bird's-eye-view, only showing the "forests" without the "trees." My approach concentrates on the long-term changes of large structures and figurations of key importance, in line with the tradition of Norbert Elias' *process sociology*. The genre is essayistic scientific prose, sometimes not being averse to metaphoric phrases, belonging to the category of *rhetoric exaggeration*.

Let us start with an example: there are relatively high chances that Hungarians – whether young or old, man or woman, educated or unschooled (etc.) – would feel inclined to cheat by not paying the fare on the tram, even in the 21st century (the same applies to concealing taxable income). At the same time, the presence of this drive has far smaller probability in a Dutch person. For him, the tram ticket – as part of the system of social bonds – serves the maintenance of the order of the nomos, hence his own interests and safety. A Dutch person's dispositions, *in the final analysis*, are in connection with the fact that Flanders, as the main motor of European urban development, was a centre of mediaeval trade where the free burghers of free cities were liberated from the landlord's jurisdiction and the feudal bonds already in the 12th-13th century and they could create their own legal system, self-governments, and administrative-political bodies. Consequently, it was *structurally conditioned* that the Netherlandish burghers strove to perform the activities that in ancient Rome were devolved upon the slaves, for when they had fulfilled their duties entailed by their privileges and they had paid their taxes, more remained in their wallets. In other words, it is related to the specificities of the long-term transformation of the society that the Dutch learnt to collaborate with each other and with diverse social institutions on the basis of *mutual trust* and *fair play* in the spirit of the jointly worked out system of norms. By the same token, the Dutch peasant became an enterprising gardener who could supply the whole of Europe with

[3] "The cumulative effect of Germany's disturbed history [...] facilitated the emergence of a particularly malignant variant of beliefs and behavioural tendencies which also arose elsewhere" (Elias 1996, 329) ... "The personality structure, conscience-formation and code of behaviour had all become attuned to this form of regime" (Elias 1996, 338).

his improved tulips, or Netherland painters could make portraits of self-possessed burghers already in the 15th-16th centuries.

When I write about a "Hungarian" or a "Dutch" person, far be it from me to insinuate that all Hungarian and Dutch people are identical. The simplifying formulation I have chosen is to suggest chances, and probabilities or, more precisely, types of chances and probabilities. Obviously, there are Dutch people who evade the fare on trams, just as there are Hungarians who would not hear of travelling without a ticket. That is, individual differences and social variations are put into brackets now because I concentrate on the *typical* and *probable* traits of national behavioural patterns. When I link up the inclination to cheat a fare with certain social specificities, I do not wish to suggest that these connections only pertain to the Hungarian context. Quite to the contrary: I think that speaking of Hungarians, I can demonstrate structural specificities of general validity that may appear in other structurally homological national settings. When apropos a 21st century tram ticket I arrive at the mediaeval cities after a sentence or two, I do not want to claim that the *cause* of a Dutchman's contemporary behaviour is the Dutch urban development; all I want to suggest is that a national habitus is conceivable as the aggregate of behavioural patterns rooted in the distant past and conditioned by complex dependency chains in the long run. These patterns can be retrieved situationally, can be "hired out from the wardrobe of national behaviour" and without being clearly aware of their origins, they can structure with great probability the behaviour of people with different social embeddedness.

In Hungary, unlike in the Netherlands, no portraits were painted of self-conscious burghers in the 15th-16th centuries, for neither the class of self-possessed and active urban citizens nor a professional body of painters with crystallized skills and inner differentiation who could depict them existed in that period (Although Hungarian aristocrats could easily commission paintings from abroad, local painters satisfying the demand of the rising bourgeoisie only appeared in Hungary in the late 19th century, but looking for the Eyck brothers or a van der Weyden among them would be in vain). While, in the Middle Ages, towns turned against the nobility in the Western part of Europe, and created their own economy and thus became the model and motor of social development and the emerging state institutions, the social weight of towns and the middle class is negligible in the history of Hungary. The inhabitants of the few cities that existed (mainly in Upper Hungary and Transylvania) were mostly not Hungarian, and in the market towns of the Great Plain it was the liberties of peasants which were asserted first and foremost.

2. Long-Term Structural Constraints

During the last few decades, a huge amount of scholarship has been published on European state formation mechanisms – mostly starting from a Weberian perspective. As it is well-known in Weberian parlance, the emergence of the state is associated with the monopolization and institutionalization of the legitimate means of violence and taxation and the successive democratization of these monopolies. The state is a "compulsory political organization" which controls a territorial area in which "the administrative staff successfully upholds the claim to the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in the enforcement of its order" (Weber 1978, 54). Weber emphasises the emergence of a rational legal administration, the rise of extractive capacity by a central government, and the legitimacy of such authority.[4] Hendrik Spruyt (2011) draws attention to similarities between neo-Marxist and neo-institutionalist theorists of state formation, claiming that they even concur on the rise of trade as the harbinger of early capitalism.[5] In fact, Anderson (1974a, 1974b) and North and Thomas (1973) put emphasis on the importance of urbanization, trade, and the emergence of the bourgeoisie – issues the lack of which has huge importance in the Hungarian history (as I will discuss below).

Michael Roberts introduces the term *military revolution* and defines its four distinguishing elements: tactical revolution, the growth of the size of the army, the appearance of complex strategies, and the impact of the wars upon society (Roberts 1995). Parker (1988) adds the evolution of international martial law, the establishment of military academies, and the emergence of a huge literature on the art of war. According to these eminent military historians, there is a causal relationship between the military revolution and the emergence of centralized states because developments in military technology necessitate greater centralization and central revenue. In other words, military revolution produces

[4] Other authors distinguish five specificities of the modern state: 1) They are ordered by precise boundaries with administrative control across the whole; 2) They occupy large territories with control given to organized institutions; 3) They have a capital city and are endowed with symbols that embody state power; 4) The government within the state creates organizations to monitor, govern, and control its population through surveillance and record keeping; 5) They increase monitoring over time (Painter and Jeffrey 2009).

[5] "These burghers (burg dwellers, from which bourgeoisie) made their living by production and trade and thus stood outside the traditional barter, personalized exchange that formed the basis of the feudal economy. Indeed, burghers were politically free from servile bonds unlike the peasantry (city air makes free, as the medieval adage had it). Furthermore, city-states, city-leagues, loose confederal entities (such as the Swiss federation), and odd hybrid states (such as the Dutch United Provinces) held centre stage throughout late medieval and early modern European history. For example, many cities throughout northern Europe held dual allegiance to the territorial lord in their vicinity and the city-leagues of which they were members" (Spruyt 2011).

institutional innovation, which, in turn, corresponds with greater effectiveness on the battlefield.[6] Tilly's account (Tilly 1975) "melds a description of a broad exogenous change – the change in the nature of warfare – with a contractarian explanation for the rise of central authority. Central authority provided protection in exchange for revenue" (Spruyt 2011).

As for the historiography of the Habsburg Monarchy, it is pointed out that from the 1970s onwards, both Hungarian (Barta 1976; Kosáry 1976; Mazsu 1997) and non-Hungarian (Liebel 1970; Wangermann 1973; Wegert 1981; Ingrao 1986) historians see enlightened absolutism as an integral part of the struggle to overcome relative underdevelopment (see Szabo 1988, 338.) One of the most significant contributions to this issue is the synthetic book written by Evans (1979) in which the term "Central European Baroque Counter Reformation mentality" is introduced. Evans' main thesis is that – while localist sentiments and pockets of Protestantism survived – the consolidation of the Habsburg commonwealth "rested at least as much upon a set of attitudes as upon a set of policies," and "an ordered, reasonably prosperous, culturally and politically harmonious realm" emerged in Central Europe by the early eighteenth century (Evans 1979, 308). Referring to another important aspect of the Central (Eastern) European state formation, the term "ethno-cultural homogeneity" is introduced, claiming that

> the state formations in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were ethno-nationalist: […] a long road lies ahead in Eastern Europe before the region can free itself from its lengthy captivity between the bad extremes of Empire on the one hand and the ethnonational Nation-State on the other. (Péteri 2000, 367)

Following this line of thought, in one of the most often quoted historical narratives, Jenő Szűcs (1983) positions Hungary (and Central-Eastern Europe) within the "three historical European regions" – i.e., between Western Europe and Russia. According to Szűcs, in the Western part of Europe the cumulative changes resulted in structural changes. The structures implied the conditions of their transformation, hence absolutism was only a temporary period in that part of the world (however many centuries it lasted for); state and society gradually separated and state emerged as a derivate of society. In Hungary, the five hundred yearlong evolution of the West took place in one and a half centuries; hence it is more inorganic, rougher, vaguer, and more hybrid-like. Contracts based on feudal relationships were rudimentary: reciprocity and mutuality of the unequal partners could hardly be asserted. Further, the feudal court, the

[6] Undoubtedly, the military revolution *has some links* to the emergence of centralized states, enlightened absolutism, and capitalism. Yet caution is advisable before a direct causal relationship is postulated. It is namely a cardinal question what is taken to be the cause and what is the consequence in the complex system of interdependencies.

chivalric milieu, and knightly culture were missing, consequently no romance literature evolved.

Thus, if our goal is to reconstruct the structural conditions of the "stubbornly recurring long-term historical patterns" (Szűcs 1983, 11) in Hungarian society, it is advisable to start with the geopolitical position of the country which – as an external constraint – has determined the circle of possible structural variants and that of the dispositions they conditioned for the past one thousand years. While the leading states of West Europe were trying to colonize the entire globe and Russia could expand toward Siberia – creating the world's largest state up to the Bering Strait – East-Central Europe had no possibility of expansion, no outlet. The propelling force of modern development, towns, were founded on easily accessible seashores and riversides from antiquity (until the late 19th century, the Danube was not navigable upstream from the Black Sea through the Iron Gate, yet even so it was one of the most important infrastructural conditions of Hungarian urban development as western travellers and merchants arrived in the Carpathian Basin along this route from the Middle Ages). Though in mediaeval Europe the preponderance of waterside towns prevailed, from the 11th century onwards, attempts were made to colonize the heartland of the continent too: in the Carolingian age, lots of marshlands were drained, woodlands cleared, virgin soil broken, massively reducing the proportion of uncultivated arable areas.

Hungary – as part of the East-Central European region – has always been on the periphery of the world systems of great powers from the Middle Ages to our day (be it Charlemagne's empire, the Ottoman Empire, Russia, the Habsburg Monarchy, the Soviet Union, or the European Union). This region has always been the eastern margin of the Europe-centred world economy where the typical partner was the large agricultural estate using villain labour. What is more, in the labour division of the Habsburg "world-system" the areas populated by Hungarians had a subordinated eastern position too. That explains why for the great colonizer countries the colonized peoples constituted the category of the *global other*, while in Central Europe the nobility in power position had a limited range of motion: there was little room to expand to, so the main chance for them was to colonize inward and downward. That is why, for the Hungarian nobility, the peasantry (and the embryonic middle class) became alien, a sort of *local other*. It is an eloquent indicator of the above-said that while the subject of cultural or social anthropology are the natives of distant continents, Hungarian ethnography – similarly to the other countries in the region – is immersed in the study of the world of the peasantry forced into subaltern existence.

It is another decisive structural specificity in this region – Szűcs argues – that the state has excessive power, trying to modernize society from above – often in opposition to the nobility defending their interests. A reform-conscious ruler is a typical East-Central European phenomenon. The state is overgrown,

over-bureaucratized, and when seen from below it appears an enemy, oppressor, and exploiter. Not independently of this, the nobility is a disproportionately broad stratum amounting to some 4-5 % of the population (in Europe, the rate is the highest in Poland at 7-8 %). The overwhelming majority of Hungarian noblemen are boorishly uncultured but "imbued with the spirit of privilege" and a strong self-awareness as an estate, identifying themselves with – and excluding all other groups from – "the entire body of the country" under the banner of the *Tripartitum*.[7] In other words: haranguing about society and nation it practically represented its own interests (it is characteristic that at the beginning of the 19th century over half the noblemen had no land, and a quarter of them were so-called "curialists", that is, they had landed property but no serfs). In this way, politics not only happened over the people's heads, but the interests of the feudal estates were formulated in opposition to social freedom and progress. The burdens were shoved upon the peasantry: the serfs rendered statute labour to the squire, tithes to the church, tax to the state, and military service on top of all that.

Perhaps most importantly (also mentioned by Szűcs but not with due emphasis), in Hungary no dense network of towns evolved. As a consequence, the urban way of living did not become a decisive structural factor which, owing to the permanent pressure for coordination, could promote the peaceful and mutually cooperative existence of diverse groups in the long run. The basic patterns of constructive bourgeois /middle-class habitus based on rational calculation, civil courage, and self-consciousness started to be crystallized in the mediaeval cities and implied – on a small, laboratory scale – the structural elements that were to give rise to the possibility of the emergence of the state and the sense of the nation a century or two later.

3. The Long Nineteenth Century

Jenő Szűcs ended his analysis with the beginning of the 19th century, so I will take up my analysis from there. Undoubtedly, there were sporadic attempts in Hungary from the late 18th century to disseminate the spirit of the Enlightenment. Without becoming immersed in the details of the 1848 revolution and the war of liberation, it can be stated that the vanguard of the liberal Hungarian nobility had a decisive role in bringing about the dualist Austro-Hungarian Monarchy with the Compromise (1867) and perhaps the most successful half a century of Hungarian history could begin (unquestionably, in a closer analysis than a bird's-eye-view this rough statement ought to be further refined. In the

[7] The *Tripartitum* (1514) is a manual of Hungarian customary law. The reputation attaching to this manual and Hungary's insulation from the Roman Law Reception meant that the Tripartitum retained authority until well into the nineteenth century (see Rady 2015).

process sociological context of the present text, however, I think it is unambiguously relevant).

One of the key elements of rocketing modernization in the second half of the 19th century was the extension of an emancipatory strategy concerning the Jews by the cream of the liberal nobility inclined towards reforms. Viktor Karády's investigations have proven (Karády and Don 1989) that since the power elite of the nobility needed allies to realize its social program, they offered a kind of "social contract of assimilation": in return for the grant of rights, masses of Jews committed themselves to assimilate into Hungarian society and to support the goals of the liberal Hungarian nationalism. In 1790, the Hungarian Diet enacted that "Jews may stay in towns" and in 1840 they were granted "free residence". From 1860 onwards, they were permitted to buy land, and after the Compromise of 1867 they were ensured "civil and political rights". This process culminated in the act of reception in 1895 which granted equal status to the Israelite religion with the other so-called "historical Hungarian churches" (Roman Catholics, Calvinists, Lutherans, and Unitarians), entitling them to the protection and support of the state. Thanks to this emancipatory strategy, the rate of the Jewish population increased at an unprecedented pace: from some 80,000 in 1784/87 (or 1.3 % of the total population) to 911,000 in 1910 (or 5 % of the total population – in this period the whole population of the country almost tripled from 6.5 million to over 18 million). The Jewish presence was particularly strong in the cities, primarily Budapest.

As part of this process, certain dispositional patterns, rooted in the ambition of collective survival of the Jews of the diaspora but absent in earlier Hungarian society, appeared. Such was the norm of maintaining a network of solidarity among Jews in different societies as well as the goal of coming to a compromise with the ruling power which we may call – after Karády – "structural pacifism," or more broadly the "political culture of non-violence." A concomitant of this structural pacifism is an intellectualism rooted in religion owing first of all to the Talmudic heritage. Judaic religion stipulates that all Jewish men must learn to read and write Hebrew. Besides, it is in their own interest to learn the languages used by the majority society. These patterns – besides being part of the rational economic behaviour – put a high price on intellectual goods: knowledge, science, art, and the idea and chances of progress, innovation, development in general, and at the same time entail, with great probability, the need for self-reflection, self-distance and hunger for information. The *Jewish habitus* incorporates the rejection of physical violence, a "productive asceticism," lack of alcoholism, moderation in consumption, that is, a social praxis based on self-discipline and self-restriction.

The dispositional patterns incorporated by Jewry fit in well with the European *bourgeois canon of virtues*. The structural roots and immanent legitimation of these patterns crystallized in the Kantian ethics must be sought in the fact that the members of the middle class – unlike the nobility – were compelled to

work for daily subsistence and social advancement (that was also one implication I intended to hint at speaking of the Dutch and the tram ticket). The *dispositional centre* of the urban citizen and his way of life organized on its basis comprises discipline, teleological rationality, economy, foresight, readiness to adapt and cooperate, and the internalization of responsibility for the community. In other words, it is built on *bonds of competent men collaborating in a sophisticated way for the common goals*. In the Middle Ages, the merchants, craftsmen, artisans, and officials incorporating urban masculinity are socialized to perform rational, thorough, and systematic work processes with discipline. Many different groups of people live in a city who must adapt to each other. In other words, a (masculine) town-dweller is socialized to suppress his violent drives and impulses in all dimensions of his life. He is aware that he is a cog in the large wheel: he knows his limitations, possibilities and prospects. It follows from the lengthening of the interdependency chains that a town-dweller also becomes capable – with great probability – of judging himself from the outside (self-reflection) and of identifying with the other's position (empathy). At the same time, he also knows that the constraints, possibilities, and prospects inherent in collective existence also form the guarantee for his and his family's security and future.

This bourgeois habitus is antithetical to the hedonist nobleman's canon of honour based on militant patterns of power. Essentially, it is this opposition that can be blamed for the aversion in Hungarian society to the patterns represented by the Jewish (and German) middle classes and for the strengthening of the patterns of anti-Semitic sentiments parallel with Jewish assimilation. Their milder 19th century forms included the ideas about the "cowardly Jew" and "weak Jew", which in the interwar period expanded into an anti-Semitic ideology, discriminative political measures, and culminated in the horrors of the *Shoah*. In a somewhat outdated fashion, we may say that the anti-Semitism of the counter-revolutionary regime between the two world wars stemmed from the logic of history (which – we know well – does not exist). It was the response of provincial Hungary to the rapid modernization of Budapest at a dazzling pace as seen from the countryside. Or, to put it differently: *seen from the countryside, Budapest was an alien tissue, a prosthesis in the body of the nation*.[8]

[8] However, according to a Hungarian figure of speech of urban origin, "the greatest height for the Hungarian peasant is the village tower, the greatest depth is the village well, and the horizon is not broader than the world seen around the village."

4. The Past One Hundred Years

There are strong structural homologies among the three political regime changes of the 20th century (1919, 1945, 1990) in Hungary. First of all, in all three cases Hungary was forced to restart her life as a member of a fallen world-system, having capitulated to her former enemies, deferring to their will and terms unconditionally after having suffered extraordinary losses and casualties. She had to reconfigure the future as a member of the former Central Powers after WWI, as one of the "last satellites" of the Axis Powers led by Germany after WWII, and as a member of the collapsing communist world-system in 1990. The political changes were effected under external pressure: by the Entente after WWI, by the Soviets after WWII, and by "the West" after 1990. None of the changes were achieved by a revolution, from grass roots, for rights fought out from inside, in an organic revolution, with leaders and mass bases. It logically follows that those with an intention of change (be it a particular strategy or a nation-saving vision) wanted to attain their goals within the shortest possible time, for it was historical experience that new powers/new rulers were already at the gate, so only what was attainable in the short run was worth the effort. In other words, *selfish narrow-mindedness is structurally conditioned*, since changes are inorganic, not engendered from inside the society but are determined by incalculable external factors, only the present counts, immediate steps must be taken. When somebody gets into a position of power, the chances are high that he will exploit it to create better conditions, and better financial standing for himself and his family – for who knows what the future will bring (the use of masculine personal pronouns is not accidental in this sentence).

As a result of capitulations, the continuity, sometimes even development begun in previous periods is broken off: the dominant forces of the earlier regimes are ousted from power. It is therefore also structurally conditioned that (sooner or later) *parvenu elites* coming from below without experience in politics or administration would take the helm, relying on lower groups, sometimes openly on the mob. After the consolidation of the Horthy regime, representatives of the traditional national aristocracy took the dominant political positions (it suffices to name two prime ministers, Counts Pál Teleki[9] and István Bethlen[10]), but it is symptomatic that, from the thirties, the aristocrats (among whom there was a considerable number of Anglophiles) were squeezed back into the Upper House with restricted power and tried to oppose the actions of the extreme right timidly from there. Gyula Gömbös[11] was the son of a Lutheran

[9] Count Pál Teleki (1879-1941), Prime Minister of Hungary from 1920 to 1921 and from 1939 to 1941. After the invasion of Yugoslavia by Nazi Germany, he committed suicide.

[10] Count István Bethlen (1874-1946), Prime Minister of Hungary from 1921 to 1931.

[11] Gyula Gömbös (1886-1936), military officer and politician, served as Prime Minister of Hungary from 1932 to 1936.

teacher with German ancestors; Ferenc Szálasi[12] was born to a poor clerk's family with Armenian-Slovak-Ruthenian background.

It was typical of the cadre polity of the 1950s that members of the earlier elites were expelled (be they aristocrats, Jewish middle-class members, or even farmers) and uneducated leaders from among workers and agrarian labourers were put in power positions. It is also true that during the decades of the Kádár regime,[13] a reform-oriented *nomenklatura* with professional and political qualities also emerged. In this period, the *parvenu elite* had enough time to professionalize and coalesce into a more or less competent ruling estate; that is to say, compared to the interwar period and after 1990 when the system led by national conservative political classes gradually shifted toward a right-wing nationalist-populist direction – from the Teleki government to Szálasi's rule, from the Antall cabinet[14] to Orbán's government – in the era between these two periods the process was reversed: from the extreme leftist Rákosi dictatorship[15] of the fifties it moved toward a more consolidated state from the sixties onwards.

After the fall of communism, the logic of elite recruitment resembled again the interwar period: with the Antall cabinet, first some centre-right representatives of the Christian conservative Europe-oriented ruling class sunken "underground" for the earlier two periods re-appeared (the majority of whom constituted the inner Christian middle-class opposition with Anglophile orientation to the Nazi-oriented Arrow Cross party), and had to vie later for power with the former communist reform-oriented elite and the urban intellectuals. Despite all their ideological differences, the rival groups of the Hungarian political elite of the nineties shared one thing: they had organic social embeddedness. They represented (1) the Christian rural and urban middle and lower middle classes with nationalist sentiments (MDF), (2) the masses elevated to a petit bourgeois existence by the Kádár regime (MSZP), and (3) the Western-oriented, middle-class intellectuals and professionals of Budapest (SZDSZ). József Antall Jr., Gyula Horn,[16] and Iván Pető[17] were authentic incorporations of these social backgrounds, value systems, and dispositional patterns.

[12] Ferenc Szálasi (1897-1946), leader of the Nazi-style Arrow Cross Party, being both Head of State and Prime Minister for the final six months of Hungary's participation in World War II. Hanged for war crimes and high treason in 1946.

[13] János Kádár (1912-1989), General Secretary of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (MSZMP) from 1956 to 1988.

[14] József Antall Jr. (1932-1993), librarian, historian, and the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Hungary after the fall of communism (1990 – 1993); leader of the central right-wing Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF) between 1989 and 1993.

[15] Mátyás Rákosi (1892-1971), ardent Stalinist, leader of the Hungarian Communist Party from 1945 to 1956.

[16] Gyula Horn (1932–2013), foreign minister in Hungary's last Communist government in 1989-90; socialist Prime Minister from 1994 to 1998.

[17] Iván Pető (1946-), historian, one of the founders of SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats), leader of SZDSZ from 1992 to 1997.

Compared to these parties, the young leaders of FIDESZ, mainly born in the mid-1960s, arrived from the countryside, from the transitional milieu of small settlements, small towns, small existences, grey economy, and household plots of the Kádár-regime. They are neither peasants nor bourgeois or workers; neither urban nor village people, and they are mostly untouched by the influence of religion. *They come from the social nowhere, as it were.* In their youth these talented politicians with "*Sturm und Drang*"-energies were able to formulate progressive, value-attached, and radical utopias. But the ecstasy of power bewitched them; for lack of embedded cultural patterns they had no *internal* moral checks and balances on the basis of which they could have initiated the building up of *external* institutional checks and balances. This new elite was not in possession of the aristocracy's canon of honour, or the bourgeoisie's canon of virtue, or again, of the lower classes' (first of all the peasantry's) disciplined and submissive canon of work disciplined by privations. While in the interwar years, treason and lying were inadmissible owing the aristocracy's canon of honour, and an intolerable moral dilemma had no solution, so suicide was the only way out – as in Count Pál Teleki's case –, the FIDESZ leaders have no moral scruples; they only have cynical, Machiavellian power technological expertise. For them, politics is rhetorical technique and political marketing subordinated to the attainment of their own material and power goals. Conscience is the indicator of weakness in their eye. Only this *parvenu*, cynical, arrogant, and immoral mentality could make Viktor Orbán, the Hungarian Prime Minister declare, speaking about the refugee crisis, that when "it is about the safety of the people […] we may ignore the humanitarian claptrap."

In all three cases – weirdly reproducing centuries-old patterns – an over-bureaucratized, overgrown state apparatus is built up with a tendency toward autocracy, subordinated to the dominant party/parties. The power elites – similarly to the reform-conscious rulers of earlier ages – wish to transform society from above and fill the key positions according to loyalty and reliability instead of expert knowledge. Hugely inflated neo-corporative elites of up to a million members come about. A cumbersome, intricate, and euphuistic bureaucracy with a touch of favouritism and nepotism is paired with over-hierarchized office apparatuses. The state takes the stance of authority toward the people: it instructs, obliges, orders; it distrusts and punishes, and changes the legal rules at will. The settlements are ruled by swell-headed town-clerks, council presidents, and mayors; the gendarme address the day-labourer with undue familiarity, the police may check the documents of a young man any time, a mayor may withdraw the possibility of communal work for the unruly behaviour of the local youth. Seen from the perspective of the lower strata, the state is the synonym of amusement for the idle rich, of deceiving the people, excessively entangled administration, and arranging matters above the people's heads. The state is the enemy and the exploiter in all three periods: strangers in suits ap-

pearing in the villages are received with the mistrust due to the agents of alien and oppressive powers.

These features are relatively well known. What is less widely known is that in all three periods in Hungary, a *masculine political culture* crystallized. On the first count, this category suggests that the power positions are almost exclusively filled by men. Women in the political elite are, at most, exceptions that prove the rule. Besides, their influence, if they are present at all, is negligible. (It is to be noted that the political sphere was dominated by men in the whole western world until the end of the 20th century, thus Hungary hardly deviated from the mainstream in this regard. In the 21st-century EU, however, Hungary considerably differs from the majority; for except Malta, the rate of female ministers and MPs is the lowest here, particularly conspicuously after 2010). Far more importantly than this biological fact, the Hungarian power elites in the past one hundred years have almost exclusively constituted of men who pursued politics on the basis of the *masculine habitus*. This context confirms that the overgrown state is actually a patriarchal state organized on the model of paternal authority crystallized in the family in which this peremptory, condescending attitude and bearing expressing paternal authority prevails. The state and the political elite expect the citizens to be quasi vassals; instead of professional expertise and competence, the knowledge to rule becomes the basis for selection mechanisms of state bureaucrats. Speaking of the "indolence" of the state which does not render services but acts like an authority, treating the citizens as subjects not partners, pinpoints the quintessence of the patriarchal authoritarian model. It is obvious and demonstrable in this context that the power elite's nepotistic world is practically organized on the basis of the logic of masculine bonds that transfer the relations of patriarchal clans into the realm of politics, similarly to other masculine institutions of the country: the pubs, casinos, academy of sciences, hospital managements, and stock exchange councils.

Looking for the core of this masculine political culture, we might conclude that in all three periods at issue the praxis of the power elite is structured by the urges of *libido dominandi*, to use Bourdieu's term (Bourdieu 2001). In other words, men in dominant positions are predisposed to fight in diverse areas of life, to pursue activities the most extreme instance of which is war. The majority of Hungarian politicians wage real or symbolic wars – against external and internal foes. The identification of the enemy created on the basis of martial rhetoric paves the way for hatred: in all three periods, the legitimation of the regime is built on an enemy image organized around a central ideology of hatred. What was in focus was not a positive future-oriented utopia, but an emotionally motivated negative knowledge implying revenge determined by the past – hatred is usually targeted at (presumed) representatives of the preceding regime. More precisely, there is a kind of utopian image of the future – practically the inverse of the vision of the present enemy image motivated by

past grievances projected into the future, be it the greatness and independence of the Hungarian nation (as in the Horthy and Orbán regimes) or the vision of communism (in the Kádár regime).

In the Horthy regime, bound by the spell of the Trianon-treaty-shock (the loss of two-thirds of the country's former territories after WW1), hatred was aimed at first at external enemies (primarily the neighbouring nations), followed by the internal foe: the Jew. In the communist period, a cold war was waged in which the West and the exploiters were the arch enemies and their representatives at home: rich farmers, the bourgeoisie, and aristocrats already without power. After the collapse of communism, the main scapegoats were the communists, then, after a generation's time – an eerie recurrence of history – the Jew would appear again, followed by the "migrant." In all these periods, of course, Hungarians have their own underclass, the Gypsies, who can be hated at will. In all three periods *the Hungarian nation became*, apart from the common language, *a hatred-bounded community*.

In the first two periods, this martial attitude and enemy image were identical with those of the countries in the same league (Germany in the interwar years, the Soviet Union after WWII), so it may be said in their defence that these constructions were (also) created in response to external pressure. The specificity of the construction of the enemy created in the second decade of the 21st century is that now there is no external pressure or compulsion; the Hungarian ruling elite has initiated and maintains the quasi warlike situation with a view to their goals. The Orbán regime generates a *civilizing war* and a *quasi-war of independence*. The novelty compared to the previous periods is that the target groups are actually fictitious: the political elite wages a rhetorical war against its own world-system ("*let's stop Brussels*") while it enjoys all the advantages (EU subsidies) of belonging to this world-system. The civilizing war is also fictitious, for there are hardly any refugees in Hungary; yet the peerlessly evil and cynical government propaganda of incredible intensity has managed to instil fear and hatred of them in the citizens. Their campaign is capable of resuscitating the most atrocious reflexes of the fascist period by inciting the susceptible public against the American businessman and philanthropist of Hungarian-Jewish origin, George Soros (and hence against Jews, capitalists, the West, and their hirelings at home) – with frightening success.

This symbolic or real warlike spirit and general atmosphere based on this masculine world-view also implies a shocking similarity in the politics of sport adopted by the power elites of all three periods. The symbolic capital objectified in sport expertise is expropriated by the state, thereby trying to legitimate its power. In the official discourses, sports appear as carriers of national excellence, with the implicit aim to contribute to the construction of self-legitimating and self-glorifying national mythologies and a sense of patriotic superiority. That is the unreflective, masculine strategy of the semi-peripheral regimes based on a politics of grievances and enemy images imbued with inferiority

complexes; in this regard, Hungary resembles the rest of the – small – semi-peripheral nations proud of their specialities and often laden with complexes who, from a social psychological perspective, have a lot to counterbalance. That is, there are good chances that the *peacock effect* works: the political elite manages to make believe that the national community is larger, more outstanding, and glorious than it is.

At the beginning of the 20th century, sports successes were still organically tied to the strategies of diverse social groups. A wonderful example is the Hungarian "assimilation race," starting at the end of the 19th century, between the Jews and Germans, an accurate indicator of which is the rivalry between two sport clubs, the MTK with a majority of Hungarians of Jewish origin and Ferencváros (Fradi) founded mainly by Hungarians of German origin (Hadas 2000). In the interwar years, the powerful Minister of Culture and Education, Kuno Klebelsberg, summed up the essence of the sports policy of the regime: *"We must make sure that the physical training earlier ensured for the entire male population by the army should be seen to by the Hungarian sports today*" (*Nemzeti Sport [National Sport]*, 24 December 1928). Sports successes had salient importance for the communist politicians, too (Hadas 2010).[18] Concerning its sports policy, in particular the huge budget of a thousand billion HUF, the Orbán regime – with its stadium building spree, suspicious legal arrangements aimed at channeling taxes into sports, organizing international sports events, and its irrational dream of hosting the Olympics – fits shockingly into this century-old trend.

5. Collective Strategies and Objectifications

To grasp the obstinately recurring behavioural patterns one may resort to the well-known categories of Hirschman as the starting point: *exit*, *voice*, and *loyalty*. It is to be stressed that the ideal typical strategies discussed below have no sharp dividing lines between them. On the one hand, some acts may rightly be subsumed under several headings – for example, Béla Bartók's[19] or Lajos Kossuth's[20] emigration was also a voiced protest. On the other hand, remaining

[18] A seemingly authentic anecdote: on a Monday morning in 1949 the Hungarian Communist dictator, Mátyás Rákosi, asks his secretary about the result of the Fradi vs Vasas football match the previous day. The secretary does not know it, for – he says – he had to deal with far more important political questions. Rákosi's response: "sport is a particularly important political question, especially when a 'left-wing' and a 'right-wing' football team are involved."

[19] Béla Bartók (1881-1945), composer, pianist, and ethnomusicologist. He is considered one of the most important composers of the 20th century.

[20] Lajos Kossuth (1802-1894), nobleman, lawyer, journalist, politician, statesman and Governor-President of the Kingdom of Hungary during the revolution of 1848-49. Internationally

with Bartók's and Kossuth's example, individual strategies might change in time: exit may follow an unsuccessful use of voice. Thirdly, the self-destructive or submerging forms of exit may mingle with or result in loyalty. Fourthly, individual ideologies and system-level consequences may deviate: a submerging person may delude him/herself that s/he is performing passive resistance, whereas the lack of action serves the survival of the regime.

Let us start with the category of protesters or *voice*, the least populous group of those cited above. There are few revolutions in Hungarian history – and there is no successful revolution in the strict sense at all. It is, however, undoubted that the revolutions of 1848 and 1956 are among the most magnificent events of Hungarian history, which – though ending in failure – had a decisive role in promoting a relatively successful consolidation period which followed quite soon after (what is more, the dualist monarchy that started with the Compromise in 1867 is the period of most dynamic development in Hungarian history). The earliest attempts to fight for "freedoms" were made by the peasantry in the 15th-16th centuries. In this regard, mention can be made of the free peasants who had the obligation to take up arms, the inhabitants of frontier zones, the remnants of the warring estate. These groups were capable of stout, stubborn, consistent resistance in the village communities; these strategies undoubtedly promoted the mobility of the peasants, the acquisition of certain communal rights, and the relaxation of the "grip" of exploitation.

Taking stock of the Hungarian revolutions and the more or less iconic figures of these revolutions, we find individual fates almost always ended in failure. This is partly because the radical revolutionaries are few and get isolated – the moderate majority only siding with them at first and gradually falling off from them – and partly because external forces sooner or later defeated them. The leaders of peasant revolutions in the 15th-16th centuries were sentenced to terribly cruel deaths; Prince Francis II Rákóczi, the leader of the Hungarian uprising against the Habsburgs in 1703-11, died alone in exile; Sándor Petőfi, *the* national poet, fell on the battlefield in 1849 at the age of 26. In the 20th century, the fate of the two most important poets ended in failure: Endre Ady was syphilitic and alcoholic; Attila József committed suicide. Imre Nagy, Pál Maléter, and other revolutionaries of 1956 were executed. The artists and dissenters of the Kádár regime either turned into alcoholics or in luckier cases they became the magi of peripheral subcultures (the list is of course incomplete, dozens of names are missing, but it may suffice to suggest that in Hungary it is almost impossible to have a successful career if someone is a revolutionary). It was perhaps the filmmaker, Miklós Jancsó alone among the artists of the highest order who – exceptions strengthen the rule – was highly esteemed by both the international professional community and the official cul-

honoured freedom fighter whose bronze bust can be found in the United States Capitol. About Kossuth, see Morgan's (2019) interesting article on celebrities.

tural policy of the Kadar regime, in addition to a considerable international career.

The group of those who can be ranged under the *exit* heading is far more populous. In Hungarian history four basic types of exit can be differentiated: migration, emigration, self-destruction, and submersion. One end of spectrum is marked by the few protesters-turned-exiles (like Kossuth and Bartók), at the other end are the millions of loyal people submerged. Typically, one of the sparks that triggered off the peasant revolt in 1437 was the limitation of free migration. The Hungarian peasants had the *right to move* from the early 14th century. There was thus a possible route of escape for the most mobile groups of the peasantry, amounting to 90 per cent of the population, which held out the promise of the alleviation of their burdens from the late Middle Ages onward. That said, domestic mobility ("horizontal mobility") did not assume mass proportions before the 19th century.

It was in the period of the dualist Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867-1918) that *emigration* first reached a large extent, millions "tottering" out of the country. During the interwar period, the intensity of emigration somewhat decreased, but it did not stop. To remain with sociology: after the 1920s the emigration of Jewish intellectual and artistic elite assumed dramatic dimensions: people who would later become world famous left Hungary. These included: Károly (Karl) Mannheim, the founder of the sociology of knowledge and the tutor of Norbert Elias, and one of the founders of British sociology; Arnold Hauser, the founder of the sociology of arts; and Károly and Mihály Polányi, social scientists who enjoyed soaring international careers (the loss through emigration affects the second generation as well: Mihály Polányi's son, János Polányi, who was born in Berlin won the Nobel Prize in chemistry; another Nobel-Prize winner, the economist Milton Friedman who was born in New York in 1912, was also the offspring of emigrant Hungarian Jews. And these examples are only the tip of the iceberg). There are world-famous Hungarian musicians from the conductor György Solti to the operetta-composer Imre Kálmán, and natural scientists and mathematicians of great stature such as János (John) Neumann and Leó Szilárd (not to speak of such celebrities as the famous illusionist and stunt performer Harry Houdini, born as Emil Weisz in Budapest, or the renowned football coach Béla Gutmann, who discovered Eusebio among others, and who is still the first to be named by any Lisbon taxi driver when Hungarians are to be identified). With the masses emigrating in 1945, 1956, and the 21st century, the sheer number of Hungarians emigrating has risen to several million (out of 10-12 million).

Special versions of exit include slow or fast self-annihilation or self-destruction from *suicide* to *alcoholism*. The rate of suicides is saliently high in Hungary in international comparison: only four successor states to the Soviet Union – Lithuania, Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan – are ahead of Hungarians. According to mortality statistics, deaths due to chronic liver disorder or cirrho-

sis place the country in the top echelon in Europe, particularly among men. These figures, however, only refer to the visible tip of the iceberg: the culture of drinking, starting the day with "pálinka," a shot of 52° proof brandy, the amount of alcohol consumed at a family dinner; "drowning sorrow in wine" are deeply embedded in the Hungarian cultural sphere in nearly every social class.

Submersion – or, to cite the late Prime Minister, József Antall Jr. "going out with the tide" – is a way of living when citizens do not identify with the ruling power but they do not turn against it either by taking steps to change the status quo. Their voice, protest or dissent, is restricted to the closed circles of family and friends, for the submerging people think they have no chance to change the existing conditions. People with a penchant for ideologies may delude themselves with the myth that they actually practice the traditional Hungarian "passive resistance". They "get out of the way of power," "they bow to it but do not give in," "they don't pay their taxes," "don't declare their income or wealth." Referring to Ferenc Deák[21], they hold that it is a "unique phenomenon in world history" that "with the politics of passivity", "through passive resistance the Hungarian nation" is able to crush the strength of oppression.

Actually, the strategies of the submerging only differ from those of the *obedient* – the category that includes the overwhelming majority of Hungarian citizens – in the need to create ideological legitimation. Of course, the mantle of the loyal also covers a wide range from those who reluctantly join to those eager beavers who pretend enthusiasm and manifest their loyalty with spectacular lip service. The submerged and the obedient think that all they can do is grumble, sulk, complain, and perform verbal acrobatics supported by high volume. While they can work hard like a horse (that is, they let themselves be exploited), they do not dare to stand up in public for their views whispered in family circles or over the card table. It has been the experience of several centuries that politics is the amusement of the idle rich, hence they take the politicians for a pack of swindlers, so they avenge themselves by cheating wherever they can, and consequently opine that every Hungarian is a dishonest cheater. It follows that when they can, they do not pay their tax or validate their tram ticket, and are extremely sorry for themselves for all this, permeated by the feeling that they have already been sadly punished for past and future. They make merry in the pub in tears for they cannot live without music. And in intoxicated moments they bravely call out "stop" but when the dawn, the dewy dawn arrives, they back out, all zeal flickering out suddenly. They stubbornly stick to what they are used to and their "frog's-eye-view" convinces them that their little gardens are the centre of the world ("*Great joy in a little garden*" was the title of a gardening manual in the Kádár era). In official situations they have a servilely respectful attitude toward officialdom, yet deep at heart they

[21] Ferenc Deák (1800-1876), politician, "the Wise Man of the Nation," led the Hungarian delegation that signed the Compromise with Austria in 1867.

feel the contempt of the oppressed sunken into helplessness. They tend to scorn anyone who does not fit their limited scope of life, and since this implies that almost their entire surroundings must be treated with contempt, they become lonely, which, in turn, generates great self-pity. They always know everything better, do not trust anyone, especially any other Hungarian, so they are ready for hatred any time. The masters of political alchemy know this perfectly well, and all they have to do is to find a surface for this demand for hatred to be projected onto.

However, submerging and obedient Hungarians are highly creative as far as the survival exercises in (sloppy) dictatorships are concerned. They are brilliant at overtaking each other at the revolving door, practicing and interpreting law with talent, reasoning with ingenuous turns and twists, and especially in the everyday world of fudging, botchery, and trickery (i.e., in the dimension of *creative masculine bricolage*). An iconic tangible *objectification* of these dispositional elements is the *csettegő* [clapper] of the Kádár era and occasionally of today's countryside: a slow-moving homemade truck. The virtuoso *bricoleur,* the *man-of all-work* who pieces together this unique vehicle on a par with folklore artefacts uses anything he found in the shed at the rear of the garden or in the friend's workshop. Iron parts of defunct war vehicles, undercarriages of Dodges, Jeeps, GAZ and ZIS cars, the re-polished body of his father's Trabant, bicycle chains, MIA, Pannonia, MIB and other motors originally belonging to submersible pumps, grinders or band-saws (be they single-cylinder gasoline consuming or two-cylinder petrol consuming motors), UAZ brake slave cylinders, driving-rod bearings, polished valves, rewound dynamos, tuned-up self-starters and V-belt pulleys, Pannonia wheels and combine-harvester chains – not to speak of the KAMAZ driving wheel and the tilting plateau of an IVECO truck…

The typical Hungarian heroes of humble birth belong in this context, as do the stunts crystallized into folk legends by members of the national golden eleven football squad of the 1950s, hallmarked by the name of Ferenc Puskás: trading in anoraks, practical jokes, pranks, including the strikers challenging the defenders to a *joke contest*, or the rumours that the soccer players spent their free time playing cards and billiard and going to horse races. In this culture, *stealing a ball* in childhood (as Puskás did) is the sign of shrewdness and dexterity and not of poverty, and boozing is an indispensable element of daily life. It can be suggested that these components of everyday praxis must also have greatly contributed to the evolution of the tactical and stylistic arsenal of Hungarian football, to the Golden Team becoming the best of the world in the 1950s.

The works of Hungarian high and popular arts are basically nourished by the experiences of rural Hungary, offering reminiscences of one's roots, the nostalgia for the home to the urban public as well (it is to be borne in mind that in the 20th century 90 per cent of the population of Budapest were of rural origin;

there was hardly any family without parents, grandparents, or other relatives living in the countryside). First and foremost, that applies to the most Hungarian of all genres, *magyar nóta* [Hungarian popular song], which are played just as often by Gypsy musicians in the Budapest restaurants as in the taverns and pubs of villages and small towns. These songs draw on the experience of rural people of peasant origin; they are typically characterized by nostalgia, a sad longing for the past, inability to act, acquiescence in the unchangeable, the acceptance or experience of the sacrificial role. This is the emotional foundation on which the "*coffee-house song*" (like the *Szomorú vasárnap* [Gloomy Sunday]), i.e., the 20th century urban version of the Hungarian popular song – a kind of Hungarian *saudade* – are built. Their musical structure is similar to *magyar nóta* and reduces tough men to tears after the fourth shot of brandy in the pub. Coffee-house songs are expressions of hopelessness, self-pity, inertia, which legitimate the abortive life of the masculine hero sunken and enclosed in his small-time, insignificant existence. The third popular Hungarian genre, *operetta* also places its narrative into the countryside: the protagonists of "*Csárdáskirálynő*" [The Csárdás Princess], "*Marica grófnő*" [Countess Maritza], "*Lili bárónő*" [Baroness Lili], or "*Mágnás Miska*" [Mickey Magnate] demonstrate how the realm of the gentry and the aristocracy operate as a referent for the urban (petit) bourgeoisie with rural roots but cherishing the illusion of social rising.

By the same token, until the mid-20th century the subject matter of the canon of literature and "classical music" were primarily found in the world of rural Hungary. This was inevitable until the last third of the 19th century, as no urban culture that could be the subject of reflection and representation existed before that date. The emerging romantic novels and national operas predominantly dealt with the responsibility centred, elevated life and problems of the aristocracy and the nobility, while the representation of rural existence merged almost unnoticed with the representation of the past. Zoltán Kodály's[22] efforts to find the "pure source" in peasant music are also part of the romantic anti-urban efforts (at the beginning Bartók also shared this approach under Kodály's influence, but from the 1920s onwards, he gradually distanced himself from Kodály). It is thus a consequence that artists of great stature nurtured by urban existence were positively received and exerted their influence mainly abroad, and not in Hungary.

Or one might take Gyula Krúdy (1878-1933), the genius of the Hungarian literature, who also predominantly depicted his rural reminiscences in his prose (describing Buda in the first part of the 20th century as a rural milieu). It is perhaps not too far-fetched to presume that his unhappy life, alcoholism, and impoverishment derived from the fact that he wanted to conquer the urban

[22] Zoltán Kodály (1882-1967), composer, ethnomusicologist, pedagogue. He is known as the creator of the "Kodály Method of music education".

world using the emotional dispositions of an archaic, rural world of gentry. That is, history past him by. Remarkably, in 1971, the cult film *Sindbad*, based on Krúdy's novel, was able to re-kindle the reminiscences of the gentry's world. The protagonist is a latent anti-hero reborn in the situation of anomie, who literally embodies the connotations buried in the subconscious of society. The naked women projected from his fancy onto the screen activate the libidinous phantasies of old and new masculine generations, legitimating the masculine domination of the everyday life (see Hadas 2003).

6. Conclusion

In this essay, I have tried to identify patterns of thought, emotions, and actions recurring obstinately from generation to generation. I have argued that, historically, no dense network of towns evolved in Hungary; consequently, neither the bourgeoisie nor the urban way of life became decisive structural factors. Middle classes did not step onto the stage of history before the second half of the 19th century, but then, when they did, they were comprised mainly of foreign – Jewish and German – elements. Hence, the Hungarian national habitus can be traced to the social position and dispositional patterns of two social classes with great structural weight: the nobility and the peasantry, positioning themselves *in opposition to* Budapest and bourgeois middle classes. There were unbridgeable gulfs between, and even within, social groups: noblemen detested not only the peasantry but also other noblemen of somewhat lower rank, and they did not keep it a secret. Similarly, a rich peasant regarded himself as superior to the strongly stratified masses of the peasantry beneath him and treated the landless with haughty mistrust and communicated with his family members in a patriarchal manner. In the long run, on the basis of these structurally conditioned, stubbornly recurring dispositional patterns, a *culture of distrust* emerged and became institutionalized in Hungary.

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